

# Organizational Letter

## Asking Maryland State Legislators

### To Override RENEW Act Study Bill Veto

August 14, 2025

Dear Maryland General Assembly members,

The climate crisis is escalating and causing serious consequences for Marylanders and the Maryland budget. There are many ways to build resilience in the face of these challenges; however, the state does not currently have a cost calculation or methodology for calculating the current or future costs of climate change impacts in the state.

In order to meet the challenges of one of the most pressing issues of our time, the Responding to Emergency Needs from Extreme Weather (RENEW) act study (SB 149 / HB 128) was authorized during the 2025 legislative session. The vote was 100/38 in the House and 29/13 in the Senate, both supermajorities. The legislation is an important cost calculation study bill, costing \$500,000, paid for by the dedicated Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) to calculate the current and future cost of climate change to the state of Maryland. Unfortunately, Governor Moore vetoed the bill in May.

The cost analysis that will be produced by the study will support Maryland's essential government functions in many ways:

- 1) The Comptroller of Maryland's Office would be able to use the cost calculation to position Maryland as a national leader on climate by using climate impact as a consideration in approving state contracts and spending, investments, the state pension, and economic and fiscal policies.
- 2) The Office of the Attorney General's Office would be able to use the cost calculation to prove that the state has suffered harm in order to file a lawsuit or seek relief from fossil fuel companies in potential climate litigation.
- 3) Local governments would be able to use the cost calculations in order to determine how to prudently prepare for escalating climate impacts such as extreme heat, sea-level rise, flooding, and saltwater intrusion. Local governments are on the frontlines of climate change. Just to build seawalls by 2040, Dorchester, Somerset, Worcester, St. Mary's,

Talbot, Anne Arundel, Queen Anne's, Kent, Wicomico, and Charles County are facing over \$1 billion each.

4) The Maryland Commission on Climate Change, which was formed to advise the Governor and General Assembly on ways to mitigate the causes of, prepare for, and adapt to the consequences of climate change, could use the information to better inform their work. Considering the fact that members hold other positions in state agencies, the legislature, local government, businesses, and nonprofits, they do not have the ability to conduct an analysis like this on their own. For example, the information collected and analyzed in the RENEW Act study would inform the Adaptation and Resiliency Working Group and progress towards its Next Generation Adaptation Plan which in its current form is a thorough and justice based analysis of how Maryland can adapt to the escalating climate crisis but has no associated cost figures.

5) The Maryland Department of Emergency Management and the Maryland Office of Resilience can utilize the results of the study to inform their ability to help Marylanders prepare for, recover from, and prevent extreme weather impacts.

6) The cost calculation is critical to determine the total potential assessment for covered entities, undergirding "polluters pay" legislation and legal suits for financial damages.

The movement to hold polluters responsible for the damages they caused through their decisions to put profit over health is growing day by day. Climate superfund bills are currently being considered in 10 states outside of Maryland, and the climate superfund principle has already been made law in New York and Vermont. In Maryland, 68% of residents support taking action to hold polluters accountable for climate costs.

**We, the undersigned organizations, ask you to override the veto of Maryland's climate cost calculation study. We look forward to celebrating your commitment to advancing decisive climate action and protecting Marylanders from the worst impacts of climate change.**

Food & Water Watch  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network  
1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East  
350.org  
AIA Maryland  
Baltimore 350  
Baltimore Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter Veterans For Peace  
Cat Ladies for America  
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Environmental Justice Ministry  
Center for Climate Strategies  
Center for Progressive Reform  
Clean Water Action

Climate Law & Policy Project  
Coal Free Curtis Bay  
Creation Care Ministry of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)  
Eco MoCo  
EJM of Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church  
Fix Maryland Rail  
Friends of the Nanticoke River  
GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic  
Howard County Climate Action  
Indivisible HoCoMD  
Institute for Policy Studies Climate policy Program  
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake  
Interfaith Power & Light (DMV)  
Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home  
Maryland Center on Economic Policy  
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative  
Maryland Legislative Coalition - Climate Justice Wing  
Maryland Pesticide Education Network  
Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund  
Mobilize Frederick  
Mountain Maryland Movement  
Muddy Branch Alliance  
Nature Forward  
Nuclear Information and Resource Service  
Out For Justice  
Poolesville Green  
Progressive Maryland  
Sentinels of Eastern Shore Health  
Sierra Club Maryland Chapter  
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA  
Solar United Neighbors  
SolaVida.org  
St. Vincent's Green Team  
Sunrise Movement  
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee  
The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County  
The Rachel Carson Council  
Third Act Maryland  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation - Earth Ministry of River Road  
Third Act Maryland